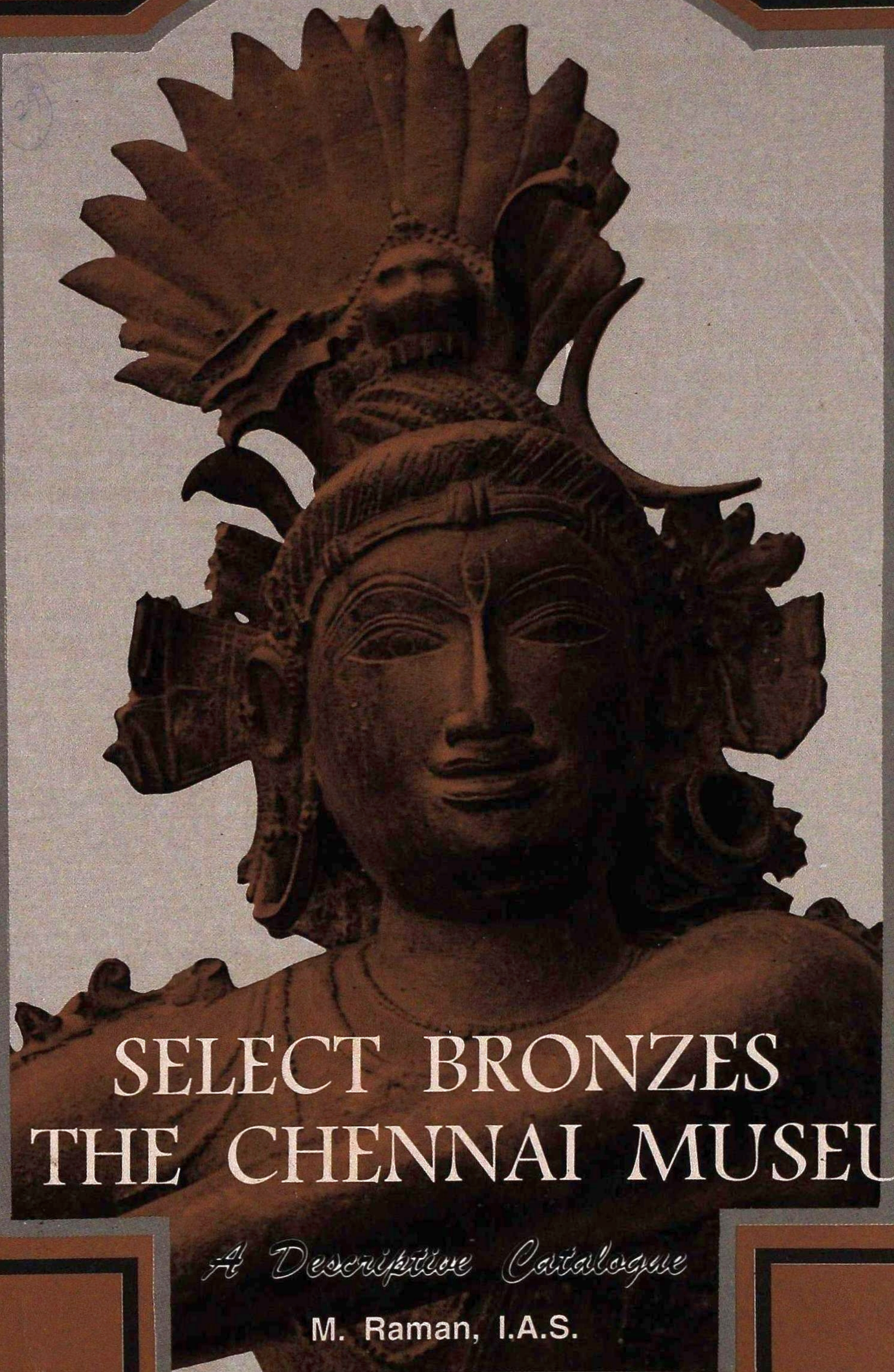

SELECT BRONZES IN THE CHENNAI MUSEUM

A Descriptive Catalogue

M. Raman, I.A.S.

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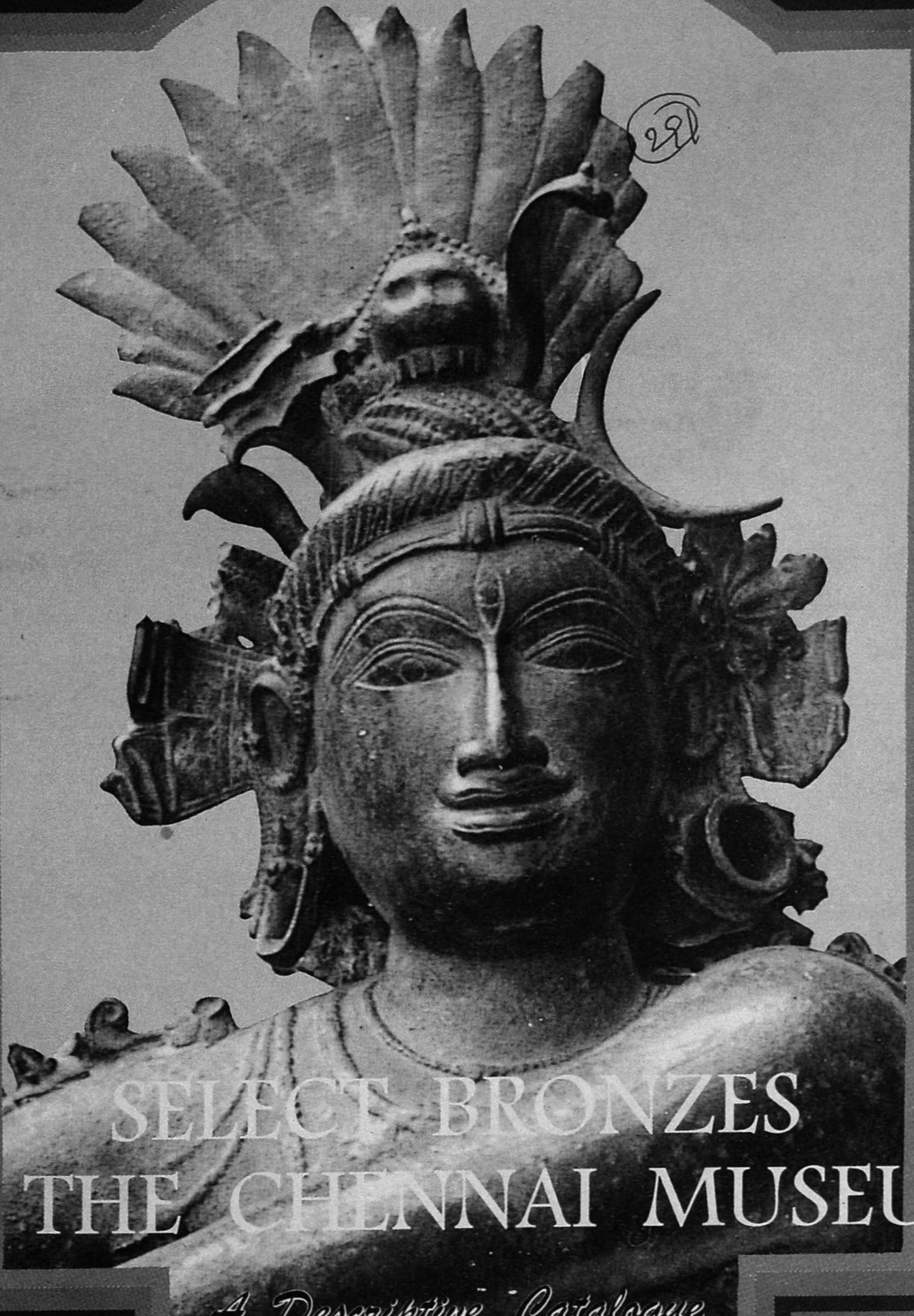

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Preface

This book does not intend to be a scholarly work, but it is our attempt to introduce the great tradition of South Indian Bronzes to the lay man. The emergence of this book was possible due to the unstinted support given to me by the staff of this museum. I am thankful to Mr. V.K. Rajamani for providing the fine pictures.

Government Museum
Chennai - 8
April 10, 1992.

M. Raman, I.A.S.
Director of Museum

Introduction

Bronzes of South India form a separate niche for themselves in the gallery of art world. They are the culmination of religious fervour, technical expertise and aesthetic experience. As such, for a proper understanding to these bronzes we have to make ourselves familiar with the historical background and cultural ethos of the people responsible for the creation of these masterpieces in metal.

Present Hinduism is a cumilative result of the interaction and infusion that took place between Vedic values and vernacular moorings through centuries in Indian History. In the post-Sangam period Tamilnadu was under the influence of non-believer religions–the Jainism and Buddhism. But with the emergence of the Pallavas in the fourth century A.D. Brahmanical ways of life and rituals took ascendency. Hindu revivalism in the form of devotional movement also started in this period. Soon it gathered strength and by 7th Century A.D. became a formidable force and secured the conversion and commitment of two great Tamil emperors, the Pallava Mahendravarman and Maravarma Pandya. The unique feature of this Bakthi Movement is the use of Tamil, the language of the land for religious propagation. The four Saivite poet saints (Nayanmars) and the twelve Vaishnavite poet saints (Alvars) by their heart melting hymns and exemplary religious life made both Saivism and Vaisnavism mass-based. These poet saints advocated respectability both to the vedic and non-vedic or Agamic prescription and the two languages that is Tamil and Sanskrit. In the codification of temple rituals also, both vedic based *yagya* with holy fire and sacrifice and non-vedic practice of ablution and adoration of God's image were included. The synthesis of these two traditions is well attested in a Sanskrit saying which states that conduct must be in accordance with Vedas in Kruta Age, in accordance with *smriti* texts in Tretha Age, in accordance with Puranas in Dvapara Age and in accordance with *agamas* in the present Kali Age Since Sanskrit was then the *lingua franca* of Indian religions, the religious teachers composed canonical works in Sanskrit besides the melodious Tamil songs composed in praise of the Lord. Among the former works a particular work of literature which prescribes procedures and laws for temple buildings, making of the images of deities and for observance of temple rituals and worship formed a separate entity. They are called *agamas* and believed as the direct sayings of the Godhead.

The term *agama* signifies the practice of worship rituals as well as the texts in Sanskrit the documents of which reflect and explain rituals related to the worship of iconic and aniconic forms of godhead especially in temples. Depending on the ideological category of the iconic worship, the tradition occurs in numerous strands. The major division of the *agamas* are Saiva, Vaishnava, Sakta, Jaina and Bauddha. While distinction do obtain between these divisions, the general orientation of the *agamas* (i.e. representation of Godhead in icons and belief in worship rituals as the royal road to salvation) is common to all of them.

Saiva *agama* which has as many as 125 major treaties is grouped in two divisions–pacific and violent divisions. The former has ten collections of texts called as *Samhitas*. They are regarded as the teachings of Sadasiva to the ten Siva forms.

The latter division has eighteen texts and are believed to be the sayings of Sadasiva to 18 rudras. Besides these twenty eight texts called as Samhitas, there are latter eighteen definitive treaties called as *paddhatis*.

Vaishnava *Agama* has two major divisions namely Vaikhanasa and Pancharatra. In the thirteenth century Madhvacharya made a third division the Tantrasara and this is a branch of Pancharatra. The Vaikhanasa outlook is remarkable for its effective reconciliation of the vedic traditions with the Tantric.

The Sakt*agama* texts treat their subject matter in four sections: (1) Vidya Pada (2) Kriya Pada (3) Yoga Pada and (4) Charya Pada. In these texts Sakti is dealt in three distinct aspects namely 1. Mantra Sakthi (power of mantras) 2. Kundalini Sakthi (power within the human body) 3. Vidya Sakthi (power of iconic forms). For each of these aspects there are treaties, manuals and hand books. Srividya which belongs to Vidya Sakthi aspect has an extensive literature and a subsidiary tradition of worship, symbolism and meditation.

The importance of the *agama* texts for iconography consists in the *dhyana slokas* they contain, which specify the nature and details of the several worship worthy forms (the *murti or archa)*. They also occasionally include valuable information concerning the method and materials used for making of icons.

Most of the *agamas* have a four fold division of the subject matter: 1. Jnana Pada (Section of Philosophical principles) 2. Yoga Pada (Section of spiritual practices) 3. Kriya Pada (Section of worship rituals and temple constructions) and 4. Charya Pada (Section of ideal conduct of the devotee). The Tamil Saivite Saint Tayumanavar considers these four stages in the reverse order of importance and describes them as bud, flower, raw fruit and ripe fruit respectively.

The melodious Tamil songs of Tirunavukkarasar, Tirujnanasambandhar and Sundarar are compiled as Devaram and those of Manikkavachagar as Tiruvachagam. The meticulous songs of the twelve Alvars are compiled as Nalayira Divya Prabhandam. These Tamil songs, their interpretations and gloss and the Saivite and Vaishnavite *agamas* were the source and authority for design and execution of the world famous Chola bronzes.

At the turn of 14th Century A.D. the whole of South India came under the protective care of the Vijayanagar power and its resulting atmosphere helped to evolve strongly a pan-South Indian culture, the roots of which had already sprouted earlier at the time of Imperial Cholas. Inspite of the Talaikotta tragedy of 1565 A.D. thanks to the Nayak's rule Hindu temple culture continued well upto 18th Century A.D. During this period besides the religious literature mentioned above Silpa Sastras were composed on the basis of the experience derived in the previous temple building activities. These too become canonical works to be followed by the master sculptor (Sthapati) and his assitants in temple building and image making. Mayamata, Manasara, Kumara Ratna, Rupamandana and Tantrasara of Anandathirtha are some of the works which became popular during this period. The Tamil works like Mandala purusha, Chinthamani nigantu and Senthanar's Divakara nigantu were also consulted by stapatis during this period.

Although bronze casting continued in the far South, unbroken by the Muslim intrusion, it gradually degenerated. The bronzes of latter centuries are mere echoes of a once majestic art. There are however exceptions and within the framework of each century and period one can find masterpieces of their period.

Ancient bronzes were made in lost-wax method which is well known as cireperdue in French. From Chola inscriptions we learn to the two ways of castings, the solid and hollow methods. They are referred to in the inscriptions as

ganam (கனம்) and *Pollal* (பொள்ளல்) . The images of deities and saints were made in solid and those of their vahanas, the vehicles in hollow.

Bronze casting is still a living art and is practised by Sthapathis who have kept alive this divine art both by preserving the texts relating to the mode of preparation and also the Dhyanaslokas (contemplative hymns) which describe the forms of the deities. As has been told in ancient works, first the image should be made of wax in the prescribed measurements of the particular image.

The lost wax method of casting permits the Sthapathi to have great freedom and enables him to make many intricate designs. The image was sculpted in bees wax in the desired colour to stimulate the colour of the metal in which it was to be cast, thus ensuring that the artist had the same lighting effect on his original model as that of the finished bronze.

The wax original was then coated with a layer of fine clay mixed with charred husk, salt and minced cotton. Depending up on the size of the image, it was convered with three or more clay layers. Holes were left in the casing for the wax to escape and to allow the molten metal to be poured. A final thicker layer covered the melted and gone out and until only the composition mould was left. Then the molten five metal alloy (Panchaloha-copper, silver, gold, brass and lead) was poured into ~~the~~ mould and left to cool. The mould was then broke open to reveal the metal copy of the original wax sculpture.

In the earlier period metal images were very meticulously fashioned with all the details present in the wax model itself and there was little finishing work after the casting. But nowadays the image as cast is usually a rough one and requires much finishing work after the casting.

The iconometry or the measurements of bodily proportion of various Gods and other beings of Hindu pantheon have been prescribed in the *agamas* and Silpa Sastras. The orthodox Sthapathis have always made their images according to these prescribed measruements otherwise called as Tala measurements.

In ancient time, painting, dance and sculpture were considered as different forms of the same thing and accordingly dance poses and bodily gyrations of dance movements were freely adopted in sculptural depictions. The disposition of hands and fingers in the sculptural forms are referred to *hastas* and *mudras*. Mudras are referred so when they have some religious significance, as for instance the Chinmudra of Dakshinamurti, which indicates the teaching attitude and the coming together of the soul and the great soul *(Paramatma)*. The following are the common hand poses with which images are made:

1.	Abhaya hasta	–	the common position of the right hand of many dieties, representing the protection affording attitude
2.	Varada hasta	–	boon confering attitude
3.	Ahuya Varada	–	inviting to confer boons
4.	Katakamukha (or) Simhakarna	–	for holding objects like lotus or lily
5.	Kartarimukha	–	as a pair of scissors for holdings weapons between the pointing and middle fingers
6.	Katyavalambita	–	hanging below the waist

The disposition of body and the posture of the bronze figures are referred as Asanas. The following are the most common ones in which the images are depicted.

1. Padmasana–It resembles a full blown lotus. The legs are crossed so that the feet rest on the thighs and the big toes of the feet are held by the hands. Arms crossed behind the body.
2. Sukhasana–It is a variation .of Padmasana form. The right leg is shown as hanging down and the left leg folded.
3. Yogasana–It is the posture of images depiciting a yogic aspect as in the form of Yoganarasimha.
4. Utkutikasana–It is the posture where one sits on the hams, with one leg folded and held upright and the other dangling down.

Bronze images are recognized by their hand poses and positions and other iconographic characteristics associated with concepts and deities. There are also broad classification of the images into *Anugrahamurtis* (boon confering forms), *Samharamurtis* (Vanquisher of evils), *Nrittamurtis* (dancing forms) and *Vaivahikamurtis* (deities in marriage attire).

The dating and identification of South Indian bronzes are made on the basis of typology one of the two basic methods of Archaeology in fixing the date of the artefacts. Facial features, contours of the figures, costumes and ornaments, attributes and other details of the icons give some clue to fix their date and place. The subject of the icon, the quality of the modelling, the casting, and finishing of the surface and the general condition of the icon both on the surface and the base will inform their biography to the adrent examiner.

The South Indian Bronzes in the Chennai Government Museum represent most of the South Indian art schools and the three ancient Indian religions (ie) Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. The oldest metal image of Indian Mother Goddess found from Tirunelveli Adichchanallur prehistoric site is one of the prestigious anthropological collections of this Museum. The third and fourth centuries bronzes of Amaravati school collected from Krishna Valley and the oldest South Indian Buddhist bronzes discovered from the ruined Buddha Vihara site of Nagapattinam in the early part of this century vouch for close links between the arts of India and Indonesia in general and the art of metal workers from South India and that of Sailendras in particular.

The earliest phase of a continued art history in the far south begins in early seventh century. Some of the fine small medium sized bronzes of South India belong to this Pallava period. The Pallava characteristic of the sacred thread flowing over the right arm is strikingly represented in the famous Vishapaharana Siva from Kilapuddanur, now in Chennai Museum. Another masterpiece of about the same period is the Nataraja from Kuram. This is a Pallava image from a Pallava temple from where an important copper plate grant of Pallava King Paramesvaravarman I's has been obtained. The unique representation of *Urdhvajanu* pose and the Naga pasa in the upper hand are the peculiar features of this bronze and they make the bronze iconographically very special. The excellent Thiruvalangadu Somaskanda bronze represents the last phase of the Pallava style.

The miniature seated Simhanada from the collection of Buddhist images from Nagapattinam is one of the rare specimens of Pallava period. It is unique both in its theme and poise. The excellent Thiruvalangadu Somaskanda bronze stated above is a good specimen for the last phase of the Pallava style. In this family group, Skanda is missing. But it does not reduce its charm and elegance. The large trident and the skull held in the lower hands and the axe and antelope on the upper ones convey the convergence of Chalukyan and Pallava schools.

The medium size Nataraja from Okkur, now in the Museum, is a worthy art piece of early Chola period. In this bronze the outspread jatas are arranged so

far apart from one another that the figure assumes folk art character. Another one, the Chandrasekhara, from Chettipulam, also because of its style should be grouped with Okkur Nataraja.

The Museum has about a dozen of good Nataraja bronzes of Chola period. The one from Tiruvalangadu is well known to the world. The poise of this figure, its rhythmic movement the flexions of the body and limbs, the perfect symmetry of physical proportions and the flowing contours are all blended into a composition so amazingly that Rodin, the world famous sculptor declared this bronze, as the most perfect representation of rhythmic movement in the world. Normally Nataraja is shown with Prabavali. But the Punganur Nataraja in the Museum is an example for its theme without Prabavali. The one from Kankoduttavanitham and Velankanni stand as good examples for Chola art charming and elegancy respectively. Siva is not only the lord of dance but also of music. The latter them is represented in his Vinadhara form and there are few of them in the Museum.

The seated Buddha of the same collection of Nagapattinam Buddhist bronzes and the standing Buddha of the same collection are the best Chola Buddhist images in the Museum. The beautiful seated Buddha flanked by the Naga Chauri bearers is comparable because of its beauty and pose with the other masterpieces of its time.

The unique Pandya school Nataraja from Poruppumettuppatti, Madurai, now in the Museum is singular in showing Siva dancing with the right leg raised instead of the usual left one. This form is peculiar to the Silver hall of Madurai where the temple figure is in this form and is called Marukal Natesa.

The Somaskanda group from Nidur, Chola King in anjali pose and the seated Jambala miniature bronze from the collection of Nagapattinam Buddhist bronzes are the best examples of later Chola art in the Museum. The Buddhist deity Jambala is the equivalent of the Hindu Kubera. Usually he is depicted with a pot belly and short and fat limbs as we seen in this small miniature.

The seated Yasoda with baby Krishna on a rectangular seat from Thogur, Thanjavur, now in the Museum, is a good example of early Vijayanagar period bordering on late Chola time. In the belonging of Vijayanagar period bronzes were very prolific with a degree of stylisation. But a later times it became more and more a mechanical output. Remarkable iconographic forms, representation of which are rarer in the earlier centuries becomes more frequent during this period. The Heramba Ganapathi from Nagapattinam and Kaliya Krishna images are thus the production of this period.

The art of metal cating though it degenerated in later period, is did not altogether die in South India, where it is still kept alive in certain pocket areas like Swamimalai near Kumbakonam and the State Government Poompuhar Centres. It is hoped that these kind of projects will help the revival of this art and give it a worthy place in the cultural life of India, as it richly deserves.

MOTHER GODDESS, Adichanallur, Tirunelveli Dt., 7th Century B.C. Ht: 7 cms

This prehistoric bronze figure is the earliest object in metal available in Tamil Nadu. This image is very much akin to the terracottas found in Indus Valley.

BUDDHA, Amaravati, Guntur Dt., 5th Century A.D. Ht: 43.5 cms

This standing image of Buddha was acquired from the excavations of the Amaravati stupas. The right hand is in the *varada* pose while the left hand is holding the ends of the robe. It may be mentioned that Amaravati was a great centre of stone and metal work. This is the earliest and most interesting bronze, acquired from the Amaravati excavations.

SIMHANADA (or LOKESVARA), Nagapattinam, Thanjavur Dt., 9th Century A.D. Ht: 10.3 cms

He is represented as seated in *Maharaja lila* pose with a pair of hands. The right hand is in *kataka* and the left rests on the base. There is a prominent flower design on the top of the *makuta,* which is characteristic of the *jata-makuta* of this period. The hair is hanging in elegant twisted curls. This figure suggests affinities with the Indonesian school. The image is free from ornamentation and it is of excellent finish comparable with Pallava figures.

VISHAPAHARANA, Kilappudanur, Thanjavur Dt., 9th Century A.D.
Ht: 43 cms

This aspect of Siva tells that he swallowed the deadly poison, *Kalakuta*, that emerged from the churning the ocean of milk by Devas and Asuras.

He is represented as seated and in his upper hands, he holds the usual emblems (i.e.) axe and antelope. His lower right hand holds a vessel containing the poison. He holds a snake in the lowest left.

VISHNU, Mangammalpuram, Trichy Dt., 9th Century A.D. Ht: 26 cms

Vishnu is the second member of the Trinity and is considered to be responsible for the protection of the Universe. He is an old Vedic god and finds mention in all the four Vedas.

In the present image, as seen in the Pallava icons, the upper arms start from the elbows and the image is natural in pose and moulding without flexion. It has oval shaped face and rounder limbs - characteristic features of the Pallava period. Srivasta symbol is symbolically done and it is a good example of the typical Pallava icon.

NATESA, Okkur, Thanjavur Dt., 9th Century A.D. - Ht: 70 cms

In this icon only four strands of matted hairs fly on each side. The upper left hand carries fire in a cup on the palm of the hand. This is an early piece showing the utmost simplicity in workmanship. The head-dress of the figure shows for the first time, the crescent and the *dhatura* flower in the round.

NATESA, Kuram, Chengalpattu Dt., 9th Century A.D. Ht: 53 cms

According to Bharata's Natyasastra this model is called Urdhvajanu. This is the only representation of Natesa in this pose in metal. The upper left hand holds a snake, instead of fire, a noteworthy feature. Draperies are beautifully moulded. "Though the face is worn out the modelling of the figure and the treatment of the ornaments and garments are unmistakably in the Pallava style".

BUDDHA, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 89 cms

The image stands on a circular *padmasana*. The right hand is in *abhaya* pose. Oval face with nose, lips, chin, eyes and forehead are proportionally carved. Curls of hair surmounted a *Usnisa* which indicates the idea of *jnana*. The facial expression is beautiful.

KALI, Tiruvengadu, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 45.5 cms

Kali seated on a high *bhadrasana* has four hands. The upper right hand carries a *trisula* while the upper left carries an *ankusa,* the lower left holds a *kapala* while the lower right is in *abhaya*. She has a terrific countenance having protruding tusks from the mouth. The restrained ornamentation of the image, the presence of *skandhamala* on the right side (an early characteristic feature) and the natural rendering of the head dress, are noteworthy. The head is adorned with *Jvalakesa*.

RAMA, Vadakkuppanaiyur, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 112 cms

Rama is one among the ten incarnations of Vishnu. He is the hero of the famous epic Ramayana. The right hand and the left hand are in the posture of holding the arrow and the bow respectively. Rama is shown as a prince in all his dignity and the figure has no rival in the workmanship and execution.

SITA, Vadakkuppanaiyur, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 88 cms

Sita, as the consort of Rama, is also represented in standing pose. Her head-dress *(dhammila)* is intricately carved. The left hand is in *Kataka mudra* (since broken) while the right hand is in *lola hasta*.

This is probably the finest representation of Sita in metal from anywhere in South India and is a masterpiece of the Chola Craftsman.

PARVATI WITH AN ATTENDANT,

Tiruvengimalai, Trichy Dt.,
10th Century A.D. Ht: 92 cms

Parvati stands in a *tribhanga* pose with an attendant and it is a masterpiece of the Cholas. She stands on an oval *padmasana* over a rectangular *bhadrasana*. Her right hand is in the posture of holding a flower and her left hand is placed on the head of her dwarf attendant (Vamanika). The modelling of the breasts, the disposition of the hands, especially that of the left hand which has pliability in its gentle way of placing on the head of the attendant and the disposition of the strands of hair are superb.

GANESA, Velankanni, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 52 cms

This beautiful Ganesa posseses a pleasing stance, excellent proportions and superb modelling. The upper hands carry the usual attributes *pasa* and *ankusa*. The lower ones hold the tusk and the *modaka*. The legs and hands are beautifully modelled.

PARVATI, Tiruvaduthurai, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 88 cms

Devi is benign form - represented as consort of Siva. She has only two hands. Here the right had is in *Kataka*, and the left hand hangs down freely by the side. The image is decorated very austerely.

In this, Parvati stands on a *Padmasana* in the beautiful *tri-bhanga* pose. This bronze is one of the earliest examples in which are blended in a pleasing manner elements of tradition of Andhra School and local school.

NISUMBASUDANI, Turaikadu, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 75 cms

The Goddess is destroying the demon Nisumbha. She is represented in an eight-armed figure. An "image portraying considerable vigour"–*raudra-cum-Saumya* expression. Devi's left hand is in Katakamudra, holding the trident. The other hands hold-cobra, sword, shield, bow, bell, dagger and skull cup. The right earring is a human form, while the left ear carries an owl.

MAHESVARI, Velankanni, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 50 cms

In this figure, Devi takes the attributes of her consort Siva and carries an axe and an antelope in the upper hands. The figure is seated in the *Sukhasana* posture. The hair is made to resemble a flame and is heart-like in form.

The crescent moon and the *Datura* flower are shown.

A *Yagnopavita* with all the three strands joined together is seen on the trunk.

The figure is seated on an oval *padmasana* over a *bhadrasana*, both of which are moulded together.

KANNAPPA NAYANAR, Tiruvalangadu, Chengalpattu Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 50 cms

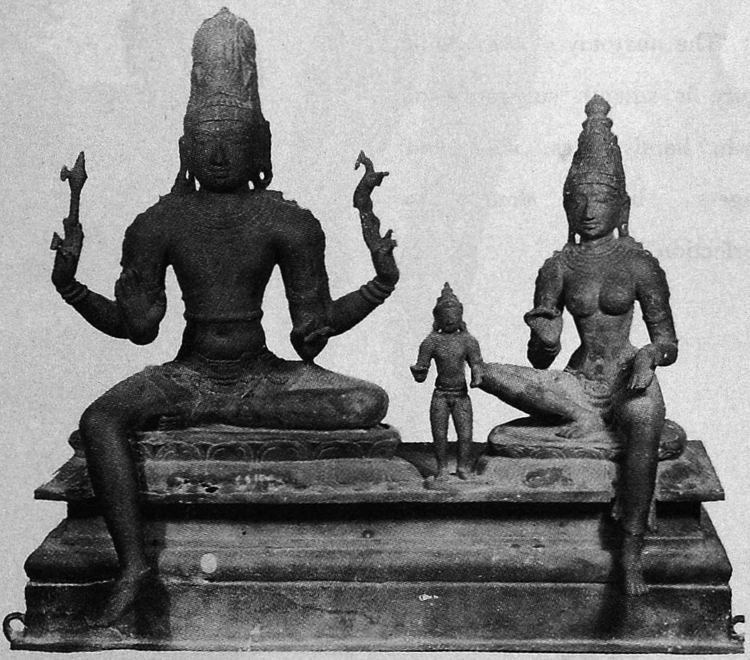
He was an outcaste young prince of hunters who gave his eyes to Siva. Here he is standing in an attitude of prayer *(anjali)* and wearing sandals. The figure stands in abhanga posture. The head dress is of *Kesa-bandha* type and is decorated with peacock feathers. The costume consists of a loin cloth, covered in front with a short apron. A dagger hangs from the girdle at the right side. The *carmambara* (animal hide is serving as cloth). The simple rustic chappals can be seen on the feet.

VISHNU, Perunthottam, Thanjavur Dt., 10th Century A.D. Ht: 83 cms

The figure of Vishnu stands in *abhanga* pose. The *kirita makuta* is ornate. The bow like hanging waist band is noteworthy. Vishnu is four armed holding the usual attributes. While the lower left holds *gada,* the right is in *abhaya*. This is a best example of an early Chola representation of Vishnu.

SOMASKANDA, Nidur, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D. Ht: 50 cms

This composition is one of the most typical specimens of Chola art. Here Siva is seated with Uma (Parvati) on his left and their son Subrahmanya (Skanda) in between them on the same pedestal. The axe and antelope are in the upper hands and the lower right in *abhaya* and the lower left in Varada. Devi's right hand is in *Kataka.* Skanda is represented as a child standing and holding a lotus flower in both hands. He is adorned with a Karanda Makuta on his head.



BUDDHA (SEATED), Nagapattinam, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D.
Ht: 73 cms

Seated on a beautiful triangular lotus-pedestal which is attached to a rectangular *bhadrasana*. Hands on the lap in *dhyana* pose. Two Nagarajas flank the image with flywhisks. A circular aureole is present behind the head. Above this separately fixed is a decorative plate consisting of heavy foliage and flowers.

"The anatomy of the whole figure is smooth suggestive of flesh, hands, legs, nose and fingers being done to perfection".

ARDHANARISVARA,

Tiruvengadu, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D.
Ht: 100 cms

As the name indicates, Siva is represented as half-male and half-female, typifying the male and female energies. The right half represents Siva and the left Parvati. Siva has a *Jatamakuta* with a crescent moon. He has three arms the lower right rests on the back of the bull and in the upper right he holds an axe. The whole of the right side (male side) is adorned with ornaments peculiar to Siva. The right leg is bent and rests on the pedestal. The drapery is upto the knee.

On the left side (female side), the image has a *Karandamakuta*. The drapery is upto the anklets and her leg is slightly bent, resting on the pedestal.

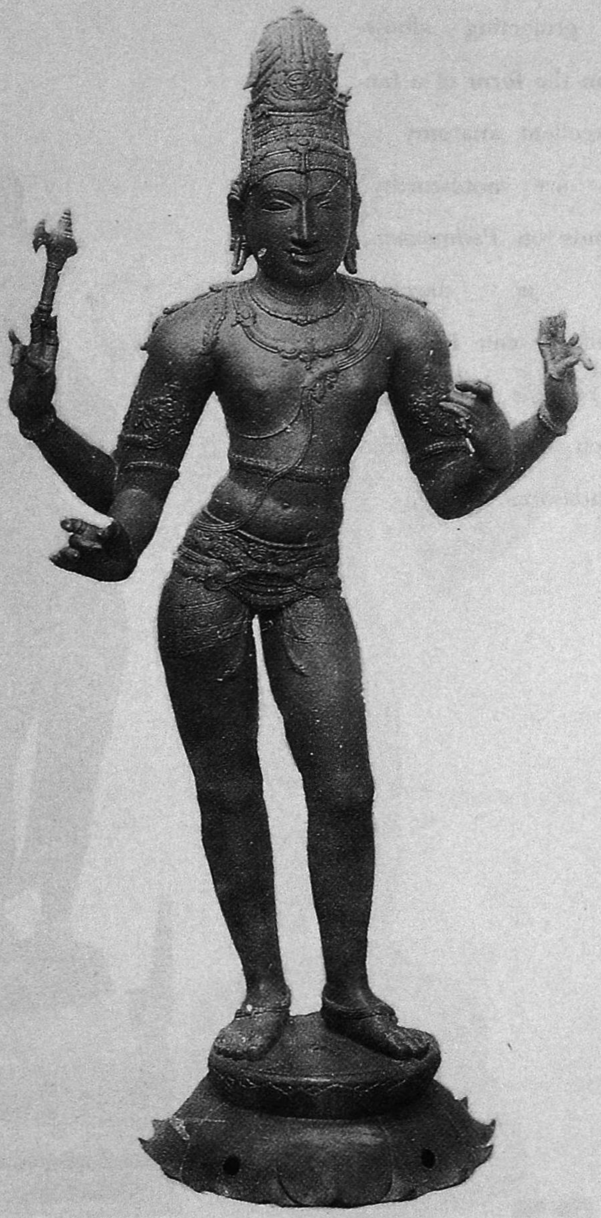
This image is referred to in an inscription in the temple at Tiruvengadu.

NATESA, Tiruvalangadu, Chengalpattu Dt., 11th Century A.D. Ht: 114.5 cms

This is the most famous image. The world famous sculptor Rodin praised this wonderful icon for its workmanship. Ornaments are finely carved. The movement of the figure is rhythmic and expression is majestic. The image has been well known for its remarkable grace and vigour. In the words of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "the movement of the figure is so admirably balanced that while it fills all space, it seems nevertheless to be at rest".

TRIPURANTAKA, Tirukkodikkaval, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D.
Ht: 99 cms

Siva, is represented as a *Samharamurti-Tripurantaka*, after he destroyed three *asuras*, who dwelt in three forts made of metals. Two pairs of hands standing in *Padmasana*. He carries his emblems in the upper hand while the lower hands are in the attitude of carrying bow and arrow. The workmanship of *Jatamakuta* and ornaments are splendid.

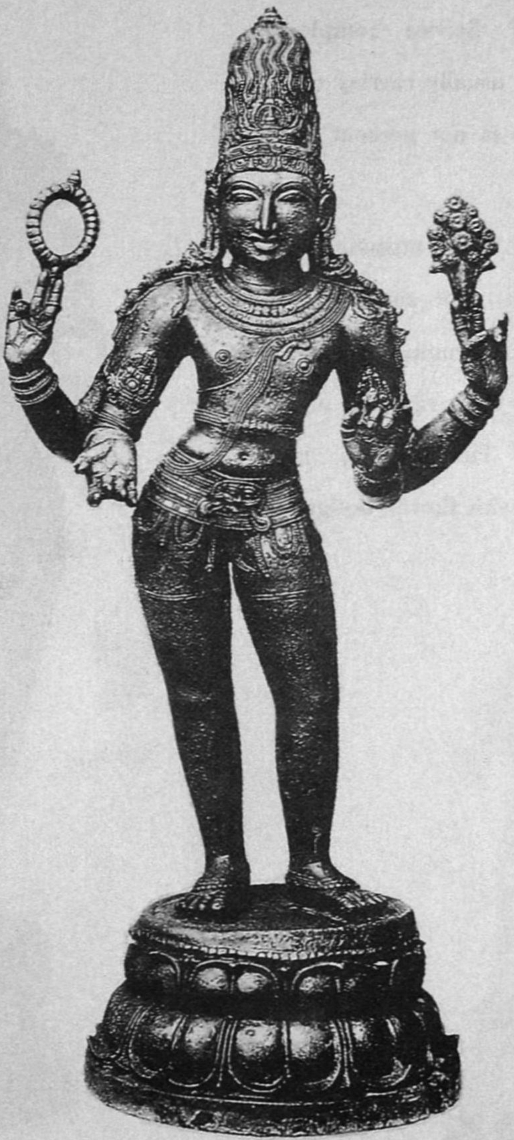


PARVATI, Okkur, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D. Ht: 64 cms

The beautiful flexion of the left arm, the projecting elbow ornaments in the form of a fan and the excellent anatomy of the figure are noteworthy. Parvati stands on *Padmasana*, *Kesa-banda* is narrow, *makara-kundalas* can be seen in ears – Strands of hair are seen on each shoulders. On the feet are *Padasaras*.

MAITREYA, Nagappatinam, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D. Ht: 75 cms

One of the images of Buddha; characterised by a Stupa on the head dress *(makuta)*. He is in standing pose on *Padmasana* with two pairs of hands. In upper hands-he carries rosary and bunch of flowers while the lower right is in *Varada* pose and the lower left is in *Kataka pose*.



CHANDIKESVARA, Velankanni, Thanjavur Dt., 11th Century A.D.
Ht: 66 cms

Chandikesvara is the steward of Siva's household and custodian of Saivite temple property. He usually carries an axe. The axe is not present in this piece.

Here he is in attitude of prayer (anjali). The simple but effective pleats composing the waist band and ribbons are noteworthy. The makuta is *jata-makuta* with flower designs at the top.

VENUGOPALA WITH CONSORTS, Chimakurti, Guntur Dt., 11th Century A.D. Ht: 22.5 cms

Here Krishna is depicted as a youth playing the flute (Venugopala). Venugopala is seen with Rukmini and Satyabhama. The figures are simple, well proportioned and neatly executed. The head dresses, necklaces and draperies are very simple. The knot in the front looks folkish in character. Venugopala is portrayed with charming expression full of divine splendour. A small dagger is tucked on the right side of Venugopala.

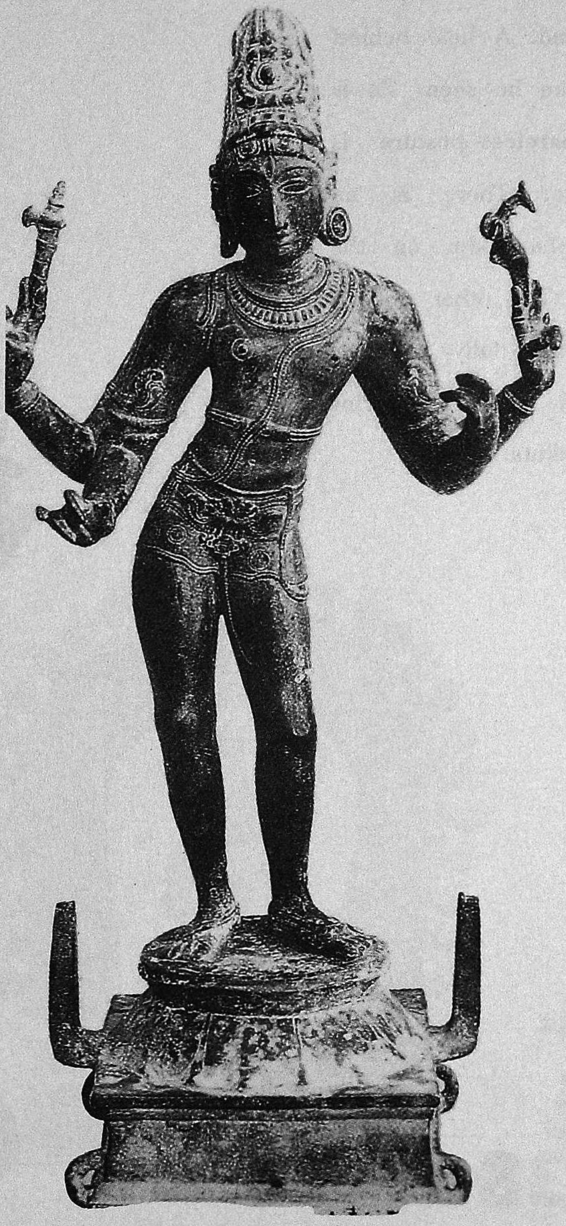
NATESA, Kankoduttavanitham, Thanjavur Dt., 12th Century A.D. Ht: 86 cms

This figure of Natesa also has four arms carrying *damaru* and *agni* in his upper hands. The lower left is in *gajahasta* and his lower right is in abhaya. This image is noted for its vigour and that is one among the well executed bronze. The prabha has interesting details and has become ornate.

VINADHARA, Vadarangam, Thanjavur Dt., 12th Century A.D. Ht: 66 cms

Siva is represented as standing. His lower hands are in the attitude of holding the instrument Vina. His upper hands carry the axe and the antelope. The figure is in *tribhanga* pose. His right leg is kept firmly on the ground, while his left leg slightly bent, is placed a little forward. Especially noteworthy is the shoulder ornament. The armlets show foliated heads which are exquisite.

Vina is intended to be provided in the hands as and when required and hence this instrument is not seen in the pictures.



SURYA, Harischandrapuram, Thanjavur Dt., 12th Century A.D. Ht: 56 cms

He is represented with a pair of hands, holding a lotus flower in each hand. A halo behind his head can be seen. He is standing barefeet–posture is Sama-bhanga. There is an ornate Simha-mukha on the waist-band. The other notable features are fully swaying Yagnopavita and tapering Karanda-makuta.

VISHNU WITH CONSORTS,

Komal, Thanjavur Dt., 13th Century A.D.
Ht: 32 cms

This is a unique sculpture. Rarely Vishnu is portrayed with a single pair of arms with Sanka and Chakra on the palms. A prominent "Vanamala", a rare feature in South Indian Bronzes can be seen. Vishnu is seated on a larger pedestal with hands in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*, while Sridevi and Bhudevi to his right and left are on smaller pedestal. The Tiruvasi with carvings is highly ornamental.

YASODA KRISHNA, Thogur, Thanjavur Dt., 13th-14th Century A.D. Ht: 12.5 cms

Yasoda holding Krishna on her lap. Yasoda is seated on an ornate bench and is seen holding baby Krishna on her right hand. The left hand is placed on the bench as if in a resting posture. The drapery has numerous folds.

MAHISHASURAMARDANI, Thambikkottai Vadakkadu, Thanjavur Dt., 13th Century A.D. Ht: 16.5 cms

She is represented as killing the demon King Mahishasura who is seen lying at her feet, with the trident. She wears the *Jata in jvala* form. She is represented with eight hands. In her right hands she holds a sula, piercing the asura, sword etc and the four left hands hold *damaru*, bell, skulls in the shape of a wheel and *kapala*. She has an ornate *prabhavali*.

BHAIRAVA, Locality not known, 13th Century A.D. Ht: 14 cms

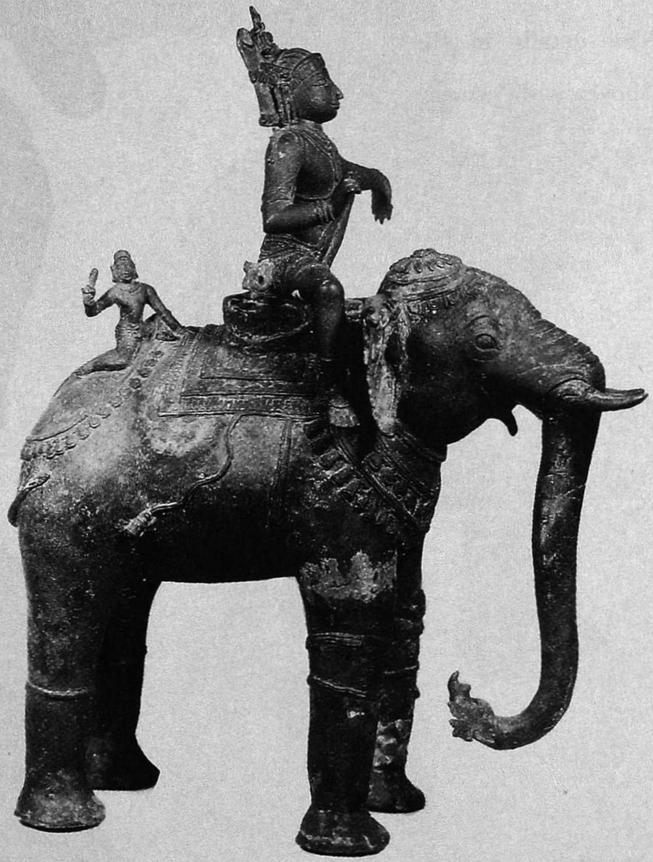
Siva in this aspect is represented as the protector of universe. *(bharana)*, and because he is terrific *(bhisana)*. He is shown naked with ten hands. His matted hair is dishevelled in the shape of *jvalakesa* adorned with a garland of skulls and snakes for ornaments.

The dog, his vehicle, is standing behind him.

He wears sacred thread and a waist band which is snake. The front hands are in *abhaya* and *varada* respectively. The other right hands, hold a *damaru*, an *ankusa*, a *khadga* and a *sula*. The other left hands correspondingly hold, a *naga*, a *pasa*, a *ghanta*, and a *Kapala*.

AYYANAR, Thogur, Thanjavur Dt., 14th Century A.D. Ht: 57 cms

He is the son of Siva and Mohini (a female form assumed by Vishnu after the churning of the ocean of milk). He is represented as seated on an elephant. He has two consorts namely Madana and Varnani. There is an attendant behind him. He is seen holding a crooked stick.



MANIKKAVACHAKA, Settipulam, Thanjavur Dt., 14th Century A.D.
Ht: 59 cms

He is the author of *Tiruvachagam* hymns. His right hand is in *upadesa* (teaching) pose, while in his left he holds a leaf of (palm leaf) manuscript. The *yagnopavita* is rendered in a beautiful swaying manner. "The details in the image are shown with peculiar delicacy"!

CRAWLING KRISHNA, Ulundangudi, Trichy Dt., 17th Century A.D. Ht: 15 cms

Balakrishna - represented as a crawling child. The beauty of hair dress an be seen from its back view *(kondai)*–circular "dhammila" type.

The front hair is elegantly curled. The ornaments are stylised.

"The sharp features of the face and the stiff modelling of the limbs", place the image in the Vijayanagar period.

THIRUMANGAI ALVAR, Srinivasanallur, Trichi Dt., 16th Century A.D. Ht: 75 cms

One of the last of Vaishnava Saints Tiruvali born. He is represented as standing with a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left hand. Sometimes the position of the hands suggests the holding of the sword and shield. The hair on his head is tied into a knot at the centre. He is profusely ornamented and wears no sacred thread.

This is "particularly well executed bronze" of the Vijayanagar Period.

KALI, Karappidagai, Thanjavur Dt., 19 Century A.D. Ht: 16 cms

This bronze is cast in folk style. An excellent specimen where all the conceivable items of a crude style are present in perfect manner (about 1800 A.D.)

She carries all of Siva's emblems, except the antelope.

MADURAI VEERAN, Naikuppam, Ramanathapuram Dt., 19th Century A.D.
Ht: 19.5 cms

This is a bronze in the typical folk style-such as applique nipples and necklace, sharply tapering limbs and bulging out of the pant between the armpits and knees.

Madurai Veeran is an attendant of the village deity Ayyanar. This bronze dates to beginning of 19th Century.

These icons typify the characteristic of primitive village God, rather than of more cultured style of images of Chola or Nayak Period. The treatment of legs, eyes and nose are not as sharp as in Chola style. The knotting of hair to right is noteworthy. He stands having a sword and a shield.